



**WORLDVIEW MADE PRACTICAL**  
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**Making Your Church a Lay Seminary - Part 2**

By Freddy Davis

According to Scripture, it is God's purpose for every human being to live in relationship with Him. In fact, this was His purpose for creating mankind in the first place. Sadly, not everyone chooses to do that, but that is His purpose.

As a part of that relationship, God has called and commissioned all who willingly enter into that relationship to partner with Him to share with others that they can know Him. Many think that the work of ministry is only for specially called Christian leaders, but that is not what the Bible teaches. It is the work of the leaders to "equip the saints for the work of ministry" (Ephesians 4:11-13). The "saints" in this context are all those who are believers in Jesus Christ. When equipped, it is the work of all of every believer to go out and "do" the work of ministry out in the world – to share with people how they can know a personal relationship with God.

In part 1 of this two part series, we dealt in more detail with this principle. We also noted that those in Christian leadership ministry typically have some kind of in-depth opportunity to become trained to do their ministry work. (You can read part one at: <http://www.marketfaith.org/2023/01/making-your-church-a-lay-seminary-part-1>.)

The truth is, those in vocational ministry generally need specialized training beyond what non-professionals need because of the nature of church leadership ministry. Of course, they need the same kind of basic theological training every Christian needs, but they might also need knowl-

edge in such things as biblical languages, philosophy of religion, denominational history, organizational management, and the like – things that put a person in a position to lead an organization and be a trainer for church members.

While these kinds of things might also be interesting for some regular church members, they are not generally necessary for them to live out their faith in the world. The practical knowledge everyday believers need to have should be focused on the things necessary for them to share the gospel and effectively live it out in daily life.

Sadly, most of the "saints" who need to be trained don't have the kind of training opportunity as do their leaders. They mostly have to fend for themselves as they try to piece together the knowledge they need to carry out God's calling on their life. But this should not be! The local church should be their seminary, and should have a systematic foundational training to get them going on their way. In today's part two of this series, we are going to give some suggestions as to what this foundational training should look like.

**So, What Needs to Be the Foundational Courses for a Church's Lay Seminary?**

***Worldview Training***

I realize that worldview training is not even on most church leaders' radar as they consider the possibility of establishing a lay seminary for their church members. In fact, I would go so far as to say that most would not know what that even consists of. And it is perfectly understandable that this would be the case.

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### Worldview Resources

It is one of the primary purposes of **MarketFaith Ministries** to provide resources to help Christians understand the practical implications of worldview. You can find many free resources that will help you in your quest at <http://www.marketfaith.org>.

That said, this may be the most important foundational element of all for any contemporary Christian discipleship ministry. In fact, if the truth were known, all of the other elements of discipleship training are dependant on this one. In the process of sharing what a solid discipleship training program should look like, we will share several key topics. But because the topic of worldview is so foundational, and so misunderstood, we will spend a little more time on our explanation of this one.

If you were to go into an area to carry out some activity where the people only spoke Japanese, yet you only spoke English, you would find yourself with quite a dilemma. You might be able to do some pointing and use hand signals to do some very basic communication, but would be totally unable to do any kind of complex activity or convey any kind of complex ideas.

A worldview is like a belief language. It is a way that people understand the very nature of reality – what is real vs. what is fantasy. It is hard to imagine that other people could consider real what you consider fantasy, and consider fantasy what you know to be real, yet there are multiple billions of people on the planet who hold worldview beliefs that are different from yours.

In America, this did not used to be much of a problem. While different people followed different faiths, and certainly not everyone was a Christian, in times past, at the very least, pretty much everyone understood the basic concepts of a biblical worldview. That is the worldview which the values and institutions of American society were founded upon. And even if they didn't agree with them, virtually everyone understood them. You could talk about Christianity, or the rule of law, or the

value of life, for instance, and people would at least grasp what you were talking about.

Fast forward to today: Modern society, has an entirely different makeup. Because of the current dominance of a naturalistic worldview in virtually every major institution of society (media, education, arts & entertainment, government, business, family, and even many churches), along with massive immigration of people from places where other worldview beliefs are dominant, the biblical worldview is now a minority point of view in America.

Thus, when you, as a Christian, try to express biblical worldview ideas in the public square, not only will a large majority of people disagree with what you are saying, many will not even understand your logic. They will evaluate what is being said as fantasy.

The way this works is that they will certainly understand your words (since you are speaking the same verbal language), but in their minds, the meaning of the words are entirely different – they speak an entirely different conceptual language. You have probably watched two talking heads on TV news shows arguing about some culture war issue with both simply talking over the other. Neither one understands the actual argument the other is making, and there is no genuine communication going on.

As Christians, when we attempt to share Christ with those who hold different worldview beliefs, we are dealing with people who speak a different conceptual language. And if we wish to effectively carry out our purpose of sharing Christ, we must learn to communicate our beliefs in a way that is understandable to them.

Throughout the years, it has mostly been missionaries that worked in overseas environments who had to concern themselves with this kind of

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training. That is simply not the case anymore. America itself is now a society that is dominated by other worldview beliefs, and it is incumbent upon everyday Christians to shift their thinking in a way that compels them to become trained how to interact in a multi-worldview environment. Without this, there are many circumstances where it will be virtually impossible to carry the message of Christ's into society.

## ***Essential Christian Doctrine Training***

As was mentioned above, every other area of training we need to do, beyond basic worldview training, needs to be addressed using a worldview paradigm – even when it comes to understanding our own Christian beliefs.

You might be interested to know that the traditional approach for doing discipleship training in American churches actually began here – with a study of Christian doctrine. Of course, our biblical beliefs are still our bottom line beliefs, so that hasn't changed. That said, our traditional approach to this study gave us no real context. We didn't need to know how our beliefs compared to other beliefs.

What has changed is the worldview environment surrounding us in modern society. We are inundated with non-biblical worldview beliefs every day, and with that, many Christians have begun absorbing those beliefs alongside their biblical beliefs. What is created in this process is a hybrid Christianity that is not really Christian. George Barna's most recent polling shows that only about 9% of self-identified American Christians hold a biblical worldview. This is a shocking statistic, but what it clearly demonstrates is that focusing only on our own Christian beliefs is simply not enough. We need to know the context of those beliefs, as well.

What we are proposing here is that we not only study our essential Christian beliefs, but understand them in a larger worldview context. That gives us a way of not only knowing our beliefs, but also of comparing them to the many non-biblical beliefs that are out there. It also helps us to grasp why ours represent Truth (reality) and others don't. This is what using a worldview paradigm does for us.

## ***Evangelism Training***

Because in America's past it was not often necessary in to communicate across worldview barriers, simply pulling out an explanation of the gospel message used to be sufficient to effectively share the gospel message. But you can't do that when dealing with people who come from other worldview backgrounds. Of course, in the end, you still have to come to the place where you do specifically share that message, but that can now no longer always be the starting place. Now, we have to first help people grasp a different way of understanding reality. They may not believe in God at all, or worship a different god, or many gods, or believe in "the force." To people from those backgrounds, the gospel message likely won't even make sense. Evangelism training using a worldview paradigm gets us around that problem.

## ***Apologetics Training***

Traditionally, apologetics involves defending our Christian faith against those who would question it. And that is still a very important skill. But in the pluralistic worldview environment we currently inhabit, we may need to also use another approach. Knowing a worldview paradigm not only helps us to have greater confidence in the truth of our own faith, but also gives us the tools we need to question other peoples' faith.

When someone tries to attack our Christian faith, they begin with the

assumption that their beliefs are right and ours are wrong. And as long as they believe that, they are very unlikely to even pay serious attention to our beliefs. Thus, it is now often necessary to force them to justify and defend their own beliefs as a precondition to us being willing to indulge their attack. Knowing worldview concepts gives us the tools to accomplish that.

### **What to Do**

Why do you think so many Christians are dropping out of church? Why do you think so many youth who were raised in church abandon the faith when they leave home after high school? Why do you think immorality is so rampant in modern society – and increasingly so? Why do you think so few Christians are willing (or even able) to confidently express and defend their faith to those who don't know Christ? Why do you think so many pastors continue to leave the ministry every month? Why do you think so many churches are greying and closing down every year? Why do you think so many churches are abandoning biblical Christianity and getting on the "woke" bandwagon?

The simple answer to all these questions is that most believers simply are not equipped to effectively minister in our modern pluralistic societal environment. And there is only one place that most will ever even have the opportunity to get that equipping – their local church. It is now more important than ever that churches create this opportunity for their members. We are already way behind the 8 ball. Don't put it off any longer.

[MarketFaith Ministries is a leader in this kind of training. Let us know if we can help you get things moving for your church.]

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